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SUBJECT: FINNISH MINISTER WIRED ABOUT WIREC 2008

REF: STATE 80334

¶1. (U) Minister of Trade and Industry Mauri Pekkarinen is very interested in participating in the 2008 Washington International Renewable Energy Conference (WIREC 2008) next March. According to Henri Backman, Senior Advisor in the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Pekkarinen would like to see a sample schedule of the Conference as soon as possible. A strong advocate of renewable energy sources, Pekkarinen is also interested in possible speaking opportunities during the Conference. Following the conference, Pekkarinen likely will travel to California to learn about renewable energy production on the west coast. Pekkarinen will also likely visit FinNode, Finland's business promotion office in San Jose.

¶2. (U) According to government sources and press accounts, Pekkarinen plans to introduce in Finland a feed-in tariff scheme that will drive Finnish renewable energy production by requiring a fixed, above-market price for energy from renewable sources. Pekkarinen believes that current market-based measures are insufficient to meet the EU's lofty renewable energy targets.

¶3. (U) Post is highlighting WIREC 2008 in public diplomacy outreach efforts, especially those related to climate change.
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